

OPINIONS OF THE CANADIAN PRESS ON THE PRESENT COLONIAL TARIFF.

"We have always been opposed to a protecting duty on Agricultural produce, believing, as we do, that it will not be productive of any perceptible benefit to the Canadian farmer, and that he has really no need of protection to enable him to attain not only a comfortable subsistence, but actual independence."—*Extract from a late Kingston paper.*

"It is melancholy that, while the Americans, loaded as they are in the British markets with differential duties, are making this vast progress, the industry of Canada, in respect of cured provisions, is almost altogether stationary. The United States have to pay for their own armies, fleets, diplomacy, and public expenses of every description, and are so burdened with local taxes, that it is alleged as a reason for imposing taxes on our frontier, that they are compelled to send their cattle into Canada to be sold for what they will bring, in order to pay those taxes. In Britain their cured provisions pay four times the duty that ours pay. All our great advantages are neutralized by the ignorance and negligence of our farmers, who, with a few exceptions, obstinately persist in rearing cattle and pigs of unimproved breeds, full of bone and skin, and without any depth of flank, and in sending these to market half fed, and, in consequence, unfit to cure to any advantage. If a farmer here and there is disposed to do better, it is impossible for him, unless he is a man of wealth, which very few of the Canadian farmers are, because to get good stock requires co-operation. If our farmers had seen their true interests, and our legislators been wise, vigorous efforts would have been made in the past session to improve the breed of cattle, instead of the incredible folly of actually taxing the importation of bulls, adding further to the difficulties, already sufficiently great from the bad state of our roads, of sending cattle to Montreal to be cured for export, instead of killing them, and sending barrelled beef to New York and Boston. The utter uselessness of any such measure for the purpose of protecting the farmer must now be obvious to the most ignorant and unreflecting. The price which the farmer will obtain will be that which can be obtained by curing for exporting, for it is of course obvious, and known to every body, that when a country produces more of any article than it consumes itself, the price of the whole is ruled by that which it can get for the balance. Now, as no local legislation can raise the price in the English market, it follows that no duty on our frontier can permanently raise our own, and the protection is evidently illusory, though prices may be a little disturbed, and not always rise and fall at the same times as they would if the trade were free. The duty on our frontier is simply a premium to the American curer, just as if his own Government allowed a like bounty in the shape of a drawback on tolls, as they do with the salt of Syracuse, or any other way; for it makes it by so much more profitable for him to cure and send to New York, and pay the foreign duty, than to drive over the frontier, have cured at Montreal, and pay the Canadian duty.

That a moderate fixed duty prevents gluts, either in provisions or in such articles as hops, is an idea altogether fallacious, and it is astonishing that any one can be so stupid as to entertain it. When there is such an excess of any article in a neighbouring state that it must be sold at any price to prevent its perishing, no duty is effectual short of prohibition; and with this view, the sliding-scale was devised in England, and has brought on a new train of evils. For such an excess of imports is

precisely what, on the admission of all parties, a fixed duty does not prevent, and that is the principal argument against it in England and Canada not being a country exporting food, protection, whether a wise thing or not, is *practicable*. But in Canada it is not practicable, and a fixed duty, high or low, is a continued embarrassment to trade, and not even an *personal* benefit to the farmer"—*Extract from a late Montreal paper.*

The views which we have set forth to the public on the subject of a reasonable protection, to the farmer, are in direct opposition to the opinions entertained by the writers of the articles from which we have made the above two extracts. It is pretty fine, indeed, for a person, who spends most of his time in the drawing-room, and who has been accustomed to wear from infancy, morocco slippers and kid gloves, to venture to make the bold assertion, that the Canadian farmer requires no protection to enable him to become independent in his circumstances. The intelligent farmer is the best judge of the matter,—and, in fact, he is the only party that can form a correct estimate of the profits of his business. We shall not, at this time, combat the bold and unwarranted assertions contained in the first quotation, but shall avail ourselves of the first favourable opportunity of pointing out a few conclusive reasons why the Canadian husbandmen require as much protection as the farmers in older countries, with whom they have to come in direct competition, in selling their staple articles of Agricultural produce.

The latter extract gives the Canadians a sound piece of chastisement for their negligence in all matters relating to their best interests. We would, however, beg to say, that a marked improvement is taking place among the agricultural community, and we are of opinion, that in the course of a few years, the agriculturists of this Colony will be celebrated for their superior knowledge of the practice and theory of their noble profession. As it regards the importation of bulls from the United States, there are as good bulls in Canada as in that country. As an evidence of the truth of this assertion, two of the best bulls, at the late Rochester exhibition, were bred by the Hon. A. Fergusson, of Woodhull, Gore District. We have superior stock, and good judges, in Canada; but have to learn the secret of *passing* our choice articles and products into favourable notice.

The utter uselessness of protection to the farmer, instead of being obvious to the most ignorant and unreflecting, is now looked upon by all classes as being a measure calculated to relieve the farmers from the difficulties, which they formerly had to contend with, in sudden fluctuations in the prices which they received for their produce. The British and Canadian markets, will, under the present arrangement, govern the prices which the Canadian agriculturist receives for his produce, whereas, under the old system, the Buffalo and Rochester markets influence the prices in our own markets, to a very considerable extent. In illustration of this matter, we would men-

tion the following case, which came under our immediate notice, and, if it were necessary, a thousand similar cases might be advanced. In the month of April last, one of our speculating neighbours,—a Buffalo Grocery Merchant,—brought into the Toronto Market 40 casks of butter, of an average good quality, each weighing 112 lbs. At that period, good butter was worth 11d. per lb. The first lots that he sold, he received 10d. per lb., the following two days 9d. per lb., and the subsequent four or five days the price gradually became reduced, until it came down to 5½d. per lb., for which he sold the remainder of his stock. The prices afterwards did not exceed 7½d. per lb., and the great bulk, in the market, only brought 6d. per lb.

We would beg to add another instance in favour of the principle of protection. In the autumn of 1839, one of the largest farmers in the district,—a friend of ours,—ploughed, in a proper manner, seventy acres of wheat stubble, which he intended to prepare in the spring for barley. Prices were firm at 3s. 2d. per bushel, at Toronto, in the early part of autumn, but in Rochester, and other neighbouring places, the best quality of barley was only worth 1s. 3d. per bushel. A Toronto brewer purchased a small cargo, and shipped it from Canby to Toronto, which cost him about 2s. per bushel, when placed in his own bins. The fact that the article was worth so little in Rochester, and that a supply might be calculated upon, influenced the brewers to evince a degree of indifference in purchasing, which had the effect of reducing the price to about 1s. 6d. per bushel, at which price it remained during the whole of that season, and also for two subsequent seasons. The farmer in question became disgusted with the state of things which this agrarian levelling produced, and, after sustaining a heavy loss in stall-feeding a number of bullocks, he came to the firm resolution that he would neither raise barley for 1s. 6d. per bushel, nor stall-feed bullocks for beef through the whole of a Canadian winter, for 15s per 100 lbs. He accordingly made an auction, and rented his farm, and turned his attention to literary pursuits. We need scarcely add, that the individual alluded to, is none other than the writer of this article.

We admit that no colonial legislation can raise the price of produce in England, but we consider that it by no means "follows that no duty on our frontier can permanently raise the prices here. Canada is yet a young country, and does not even produce enough agricultural produce for the consumption of her own population. In corroboration of this statement, we would add, that by reference to the returns lately made, that the British North American Colonies, during the years 1836, 1837, and 1838, did not export a single bushel of wheat, and in 1839 exported only 27 quarters, and in 1840, 8192 quarters, most of the latter being the growth of the Western States. In Canada produced a large surplus of wheat, pork, beef, butter, cheese, and other staples